

Background Note
Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA)
*Seminar on Transnational Trafficking and Political Instability in
Africa*

The Rationale

Attempts to entrench democratic governance in Africa are in some quarters being slowly subverted by the growing power and influence of transnational criminal networks that are now operating in (and across) several African countries. In a number of countries, the rule of law is being seriously hindered by the infiltration of these networks in the economy and body politic. Additionally, and even more disturbingly, in a few countries the stability/survival of the state itself is threatened by criminal activity.

There has been some awareness raising and alarm sounding about the issue by key stakeholders (UN, some regional governments, security forces and law enforcement agencies, ECOWAS etc) in recent years. However, despite this, notable experts and concerned parties who have monitored developments for some time still argue that much more needs to be done to address this problem, both at the national and international level. It is argued that there is a pressing need for the issue to feature more prominently within the governance and development discourse on Africa and also for more concerted and holistic efforts to be adopted by Africans and the international community to tackle it.

In order to help move the agenda forward, the Coalition for Dialogue on Africa (CoDA) is convening a seminar in Abuja, Nigeria, in October 2009, in partnership with the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission to discuss the threat, options for tackling it and how to advocate for it to be taken more seriously by African governments, the international community as well as on the overall African governance agenda (policy and academic).

The two day meeting will involve 20-25 participants including regional and international law enforcement officials, military and national security specialists, representatives from security related think-tanks, parliamentarians, academics, media crime experts, representatives from financial institutions as well as government policy makers.

Meeting Objectives

The objectives of this workshop are two-fold: i) to arrive at a shared understanding of the threat of transnational trafficking networks and operations to

political stability and the rule of law in Africa; and ii) to agree on concrete recommendations and proposals that will bring about a more coherent and inclusive response by African governments and institutions (public, private, civil society) and as well as the international community to this threat.

What is CoDA?

CoDA is the successor forum to the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA) and the Big Table (Africa-OECD) policy forum. It is distinct from the GCA in that it is completely African owned and based in Africa.

The Secretariat of the initiative is based at the headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa., Ethiopia. Although it is a joint venture of the African Union Commission (AUC), African Development Bank (AfDB) and ECA, CoDA is not an intergovernmental program of the three institutions.

CoDA's work is guided by an independent high-level Advisory Board with a former Head of State as Chairman and a highly regarded African as its Convener. The initial Chairperson of CoDA is H.E. Festus Mogae, the former President of the Republic of Botswana. The interim Convener is Prof. Abdoulaye Bathily (Senegal).